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ABSTRACT

The program developed in response to the need to study how library education might address its social responsibilities, with an innovative program which reflected minority group needs. Major portions of the report are prepared by participants with knowledge of the project, the profession and library education, and the project is treated in educational and professional terms rather than from a sociological or theoretical vantage point. Included are: an educational analysis of the program, an effort to capitalize on the urban experience for library planners "The Educational Change Game," and comments by the participants, including both the Director and the students. (AB)

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THE URBAN INFORMATION SPECIALIST PROGRAM: FIRST YEAR

A Report Prepared

for

The Library Profession

Presented

by

James Welbourne
Director

June, 1971

School of Library and Information Services
University of Maryland

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I. INTRODUCTION

In Retrospect

This is a report of a project which by all normal standards should never have begun. The people involved in it lacked many important inner city experiences and understandings. The support of the School from the beginning can at the very best be described as lukewarm. The project started in an uncertain time in the School because the dean, Paul Wasserman, had just resigned and no committee had been appointed to search for a new dean. The acting dean was not sympathetic to the program.

All these were good reasons not to begin this program. Additionally, the program was funded by the Office of Education on a one-year basis, with no formal agreement regarding its renewal. The lead time was totally insufficient to accomplish the planning and recruitment and selection tasks. Some, at least of the major participants, were experienced enough to know that the program was therefore fraught with hazards. And each of these factors did later assume paramount importance.* The participants simply did not appreciate the consequences of lack of institutional support and the particular individual and group reactions which a black oriented program arouses.

This is not to say that the confidence of the funding agency, the Office of Education, was misplaced. In their search for programs to

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* For a discussion of the issues which developed, written during a crucial period for the program, see Mary Lee Bundy, "Crisis in Library Education", Library Journal, March 1, 1971.

fund in library education there was probably no other program which better met what seemed to be the characteristics sought - an innovative program and one addressing minority group needs.

The major participants did not come fresh to poverty related work. They had, in addition to their other educational experience, been associated with the School's earlier High John project and were the initiators and builders of the School's Black Recruitment program. They had been meeting as a group for almost a year to think through how library education might address its social responsibilities.*

It was out of these several experiencesthat the Urban Information Specialist program evolved. The decision to prepare information interpreters was a selection from three key information work roles: information processor, information interpreter and information manager. The emphasis on information grew from recognition that librarianship needs to make a shift from its primary book orientation to encompass information in other forms and also to shift from a passive to active view of its role.

The program's educational philosophy was very much influenced by Birenbaum's notion that the university, by virtue of its divorcement from society, is unresponsive to the real problems of today. For this

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* For an example of the group's thinking at that time see Mary Lee Bundy and James Welbourne, "The Floating Librarian", a paper prepared for the Congress for Change, 1969.

reason, the program plan called for extensive field experience. The group had also come to learn about futures study and were excited about exploring its potential for library education. They were sympathetic to the need for student participation in all phases of the learning process. Even if they did not fully appreciate all that was involved, they certainly understood that professional practice in the ghetto required a different type of student than those normally attracted into the library field. High John had convinced them that a separate sequence of courses was not sufficient to provide the educational preparation needed.

Once contract negotiations were completed with the Office of Education, conducted during a period of severe upheaval at the University, the summer group set up recruitment and interviewing processes. By the end of the summer, twenty students had been selected from some sixty applicants. Of this group, the Office of Education provided stipend support for twelve. Twelve students were black; seven did not have full undergraduate preparation, while three students had master's degrees. A project house was also rented in College Park for class, meeting and study use; later, arrangements were made for some students to live there as well.

Mary Lee Bundy, who took the directorship when Robert Croneberger unexpectedly decided to take a position with the Detroit Public Library, arranged to distribute instructional responsibility among the various program faculty. Annie Reid took on the behavioral

portion of the program; Andrew Armitage undertook the practicum experience and the role of instructional coordinator. He also taught an informal introductory reference course for those students without library experience. Mary Lee Bundy, together with James Welbourne, who had joined the project as Associate Director, conducted a pro-seminar on Information Access. A lawyer, Arthur Cohen, who had joined the project late in the summer, joined this seminar group and also taught an informal sequence on the legal system. Robert Bundy commuted from Syracuse to teach an introductory course in the study of the future, while Paul Wasserman took all the students in his seminar on Business and Government Information Sources, taught for the regular School. This, then, comprised the fall program which also involved extensive use of outside consultants. All students took all the courses; there were no part-time students and no students entered in January.

During the semester, Mary Lee Bundy resigned as director to devote her time more fully to teaching and in helping plan the second year program. She was replaced by James Welbourne. When Andrew Armitage decided to return to the regular School, William Miles, a program consultant, undertook to direct the practicum. Three students disengaged from the program during this first semester.

In the second semester, the Practicum was expanded to six hours credit. In general, this consisted of a continuation of work begun in the first semester. This experience and Applied Research Methods,

taught by Mary Lee Bundy were the two required components. In response to student request, arrangements were made for the program to sponsor a series of "mini courses" including the following contents: visual recording techniques, audiovisual presentation, printing, computer and data processing, politics and legal rights in the ghetto; problems of individual and mass communications, violence and non-violence as ideological issues. These abbreviated experiences were selected by interested students for a total of either three or six credit hours. This program, involving the use of several outside instructors, was directed by Arthur Cohen. Robert Bundy offered an advanced course in futures forecasting, elected by seven students, while five students took courses either in the regular School or in other departments of the University.

General agreement had been reached that the second semester program required more regularity and it therefore assumed a more directed cast and can be said to have "settled down". Many of the problems in the first semester had been resolved. A serious problem in the fall had been the time required for students to find housing, while those students without stipend support had to make working arrangements. Some students had difficulty in making a link up with a community agency.

In the Applied Research Methods course, the students faced their major and most difficult task - to select and design the information project that they would pursue full time over the summer months. The first half of the course was spent in studying formal research methods

and project design. During the second half, students designed their individual projects. There were two main criteria by which the projects were to be evaluated: contribution to social change; and contribution to information knowledge. This program involved much one-to-one work with students, utilized other faculty members as advisors, and called upon outside consultants.

Thirteen students have successfully completed this phase and are presently engaged in the conduct of their projects; in a few cases involving being located away from the College Park area. Program participants will meet twice more in two-day sessions which will include oral presentations of projects.

During the entire period, the director and the program's planning committee have been engaged in support efforts - firstly, in an unsuccessful effort to secure additional stipends for those students without them; secondly, to get the approval of the faculty of the School to continue the program for another two years; and thirdly, to secure funding from the Office of Education.

The process of evolving the second year program also confirmed the faculty arrangements for the second year. James Welbourne, Mary Lee Bundy, and Paul Wasserman (part time) continue with the program as do William Miles and Robert Bundy on a part time basis. Mr. Frank Kersey, a lawyer, and Miles Martin, from Syracuse, are new additions to the program. Two of this year's graduates, Andrew

Jones and Robert Morris will remain with the program to undertake undergraduate instruction and to assist in the practicum portion of the program.

To date, twenty-one students have come for personal interviews for the master's degree program (4 white and 17 black) and letters of inquiry continue to be received. Students are also being interviewed prior to admission into the two undergraduate courses in the fall, and the instructors are currently planning this sequence. Over the summer, the program planning committee is sponsoring a series of program planning sessions, open to all interested students. Various individuals are taking responsibility for one or another session, to include: futures study, media, design of information services and information problem solving.

Thus, despite a funding setback, the participants have continued to prepare for the coming fall program. The proposal submitted to the Office of Education for funding out of this year's appropriation, was turned down. The explanation given carries no criticism of the program; all comments on the program plan were favorable; the central reasons cited were financial. On the recommendation of an Office of Education official, the program's long range planning component and the arrangements for six students to undertake advanced study have been abandoned and the size of the financial request has been considerably reduced. At the time of this writing, students and faculty are still awaiting word as to whether they will be able to join this program. And we still have no assurances

that the program will be refunded.

Our reasons for preparing this report to the profession at this point in time are two fold - to disseminate what we have learned this year as quickly as possible; to engage the support of the profession in the program's renewal efforts.

This Report

Our decision on how to make this report to the profession was dictated by a new found understanding of the importance of translating experiences into the professional mainstreams of thinking and practice as quickly as possible. The urgent need for change in this profession mitigates against the traditional long approaches.

We are very much aware of the problems in translating out of one context into another. For this reason, major portions of the report were prepared by participants who have both an intimate knowledge of this project and of the profession and library education. We have chosen to treat the project in educational and professional terms rather than from a sociological or other more theoretical vantage point. While some observations and insights are undoubtedly lost, what we have to say is more ready for professional use.

We have been analytical. But, not from the standpoint of the dispassionate, detached observer. Rather, our position is one of commitment to the program and desire to contribute first to realizing its goals and then to contribute to the profession.

Included here are the following: An educational analysis of the program, prepared by the project's program planning committee, growing

out of an earlier analysis and from current program planning sessions; an effort to capitalize on the urban experience for library education generally, presented in the form of a game, prepared by Mary Lee Bundy, "The Educational Change Game"; and a free flowing report prepared by James Welbourne in the form of "Comments". We invite comparison of these contributions with that of other sponsored projects.

Our Political Objectives

As we have reported, this report is being distributed to the profession at a crucial point in the life of the program. Many issues, largely irrelevant, have been raised regarding the program; a controversial program always leaves those not directly involved wondering what the "true story" is. Questions as to the motives of participants arise.

Lest the program be assumed as being used by its participants as merely a political base from which to foment change and dissent in the profession, we point out that the majority of those involved are not out of this discipline; they have no interest in the profession except as a place to develop the information potential for ghetto people. The library participants do intend to continue to be spokesmen for reform. But, one cannot come into daily contact with the realities of poverty without having most other concerns dim in comparison. There is no place and no time for any activity which does not promise a return for ghetto people.

The combined assessment of those most intimately involved in this program over the last year is that information access is a potentially powerful social response to the urban crisis. The question they are asking this profession is:

> "Is librarianship the profession in which to develop and mature this potential?"

They are also asking the members of the larger white community who will be involved in making support decisions:

> "Will you support this program which black people have identified as important to them?"

We do not hesitate to thus involve members of this profession. For we do not believe that such critical decisions should rest solely in the hands of a few. We no longer have a central commitment to "saving" the profession - but the librarians in the program would like the library field to provide the hospitality for research and education in urban information access.

Our experience confirms that to assume the position of suppliant is to invite rejection. It would be to deny this profession this opportunity and to betray the interests of the people we are committed to serve. We therefore invite those librarians, administrators and educators who receive this report and others to whom they show it, to contact the United States Commissioner of Education and give him a yes vote to continue support of the Urban Information Specialist program for the next two years.

II. EDUCATIONAL ANALYSIS *

Summary of Major Accomplishments

SURVIVAL

The fact that this program survived what became a trial by fire year must be listed first among its accomplishments. This program has attracted almost every basic issue inherent in a program of this nature. Its renewal was the object of major dissent in the School; the program's continuation became finally a major campus issue as well. Internal differences caused by these outside factors, by its open ended approach, its racial composition and the varying commitments and expectancies held by students and faculty created problems, challenges and conflicts. This year's program participants had to cope with the key issues of racism, standards, authority and control of the project internally and in relation to the regular School and the University. All this gave the instructional program a unique environment, posed particular instructional problems and caused problems of student adjustment to course experiences. Nevertheless, these hard won insights will be invaluable in the design and execution of the second year program and in making assessments regarding success and failure factors in programs of this type.

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*Prepared by the Urban Information Specialist Program, Planning Committee.

BENEFITS TO THIS YEAR'S STUDENTS

The program this year has to varying degrees fulfilled its commitments to this year's students; always a problem in an experimental program where students too easily become guinea pigs. The assessment of accomplishments is made in terms of the degree to which students have found a future information work role as evidenced by their purusal of a summer project designed to either plan or carry out information work. As we shall discuss, not all of the students have been able to make this link up. The explanation for differing success provides insight into success factors in preparation for urban information work.

VIABILITY OF WORK ROLE CONFIRMED

This year's program has demonstrated that there is an urgent need for professionals prepared to perform in an information capacity with the urban poor. Urban information service is also a viable field for study and research, for significant problems lending themselves to research analysis have also been identified. Once removed from the context of libraries, reliance on printed resources and a passive view of the information function, information utilization in support of solving crucial ghetto problems can be defined and implemented.

NEED FOR A TOTAL APPROACH VERIFIED

Also confirmed is the need for a total program approach to educational preparation in this field. This need continues to exist for several reasons - to provide the environment where significant urban problems can be identified, not possible in the more traditional curriculum where important traditions and value orientations preclude this analysis and realization; to provide the time needed to both give the student general background and some work toward a specialization in some aspect of urban information work. This total approach is not merely a matter of providing a program more directly relevant to the urban experience; it also is undertaking to provide information and related skills and sets of field and other experience not provided in the School's regular program.

OBJECTIVES AND CONTENT DEVELOPED

Out of this year's experience, we now have a better basis for more specifically defining program objectives, priorities and content. These assessments are based upon experience with contents this year, the deepened understanding which the participants now have of the urban crisis, and from analysis of the information work roles which the students have performed either in their practicum or their major project.

APPROACHES TESTED

Within the range of experiences, approaches and methods tried in this year's program, the faculty now have important insights into how to design curriculum and field experiences for the second year.

FACULTY RE-EDUCATION

This first year was an invaluable learning experience for the program faculty. Those who are continuing with the program now have valuable insights to translate into their instructional effort the second year. Not only has content stood important tests, but faculty have had to learn how to teach and relate to students with other than the usual middle class white backgrounds.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS IDENTIFIED

Individual and group success factors in this program have been identified along a number of dimensions and crucial problems defined for solution. We believe we have a better grasp of prior background and experiences needed for success in inner city work. The significance of racial, cultural, ideological and other value orientations and perspectives in terms of success in the program have also been identified.

STUDENT PROJECTS

In measuring accomplishments, special mention should be made of the student's major project. These projects have made a special contribution to the

STUDENT PROJECTS (Contd.)

program in terms of helping to define information work roles and to analyze skills and understandings needed to perform these roles. This contribution is also a very direct one to the institutions, groups and agencies for whom the students' projects are being conducted. Thus, the urban program in its first year can be said to have helped bring into being the following: an educational opportunity center in the city of Detroit; an educational program for teenagers being sponsored by the Montclair Public Library; a welfare rights information center design applicable in a range of situations; a union oriented community information service for the City of Richmond; an undergraduate information program for the University of Maryland; an informal, street oriented information service for high school youth to function in either Brooklyn or Washington D.C., as well as several more specific projects, including the design of a thesaurus for "alternate" information, an instrument to measure the response of graduate professional schools to black inner city needs, a funding directory prepared for non-sectarian inner city youth organizations to identify possible foundation support.

INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

The urban program has been among the pioneering ventures of this University in minority related programs and has therefore assisted in policy formulation in this critical area at both the School and University level. The Graduate School considers this program to be part of its experiment in the waiving of admissions criteria to meet special circumstances. Arrangements in the School which give the program the degree of independence it requires, may also become a model for other black oriented programs. The participation of the Black Student Union in the question of the program's renewal has resulted in at least some recognition that black people have a greater stake and therefore should have a say in policy decisions regarding inner city programs.

CREDIBILITY ESTABLISHED

Even while seeking recognition and approval from institutional groups, the program has also had the task of establishing and maintaining the confidence of inner city interests. Given the present ghetto suspicion and mistrust, this acceptance is urgently needed and not easily won. This aspect therefore must be listed among the major accomplishments of the program this year. Success, in great measure, is due to the program's struggle for survival which served to bring it to the attention of inner city interests and black

leadership locally and nationally.

A related success which places this program in advance of programs in library education, is its now proven ability to attract highly qualified individuals from the black community to study in the program.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROFESSION

Through the Maryland Urban Information program, the library profession now has one reservoir of talent and experience in relating to the crucial information problems of the ghetto. We expect public libraries will be a major place of employment for the program's graduates and this explains why the public library community has been most supportive of the program, facing as it does the critical need to make its services meaningful in an increasingly troubled environment.

Major Insights - First Year

NEED FOR PRIORITIES

The program now needs a better formulated set of information objectives based upon a more fully developed rationale for this program's response to the urban crisis. These judgments are needed in order to make decisions regarding content of individual courses, to develop case and other teaching materials, to better integrate and focus the total program experience and to assist in the recruitment, selection and informing of prospective students.

VALUE OF THE FUTURES APPROACH

This year's testing with the futures approach confirms both the value of futures skills and the potential of this approach in defining program objectives for the second year. What it allows is a means for getting a better grasp on problems of the city and their solution. This long range view permits preparation to be directed toward future information problems, but also to identify and relate to critical change needs.

NATURE OF THE URBAN POOR INFORMATION PROBLEM

A number of frameworks for conceptualizing the urban information problem have been found useful in the instructional program. The problem can be viewed in terms of what we are calling "response" levels.

Survival

At the most basic level, ghetto residents have urgent information survival needs in every area of their life and in relation to each of the institutions which, in effect, hold power over them. As welfare recipients, as tenants, as consumers, and in connection with the police and courts, they need to know what services are available to them - what their rights are and how to obtain them. Advice on drug use is needed regarding the health agencies and services which can help them or members of their families.

Enhanced Opportunities

Ghetto dwellers need also to be informed about other special agencies and programs which are available -

special opportunities for minority group members to attend college, minority employment, training programs, and small business opportunities, existing housing programs and how to take advantage of them. They need in particular to know the disadvantages as well as the advantages of such programs.

Community Participation

There is a crucial need to overcome citizen and community apathy, more understandable in inner city residents, but undeniably a critical barrier to immediate and long term improvements. People need to be informed about pending developments in terms of the benefits and harm to them in such areas as housing programs, welfare and law enforcement legislation, highway construction plans and educational programs. Potentially positive developments such as cable and cassette television need to be brought to the attention of communities and their leadership. A community's prospects for control over its own life situation is heightened or reduced by the extent to which it has information needed to make judgments and then to act on them.

Group Effort

"Grass roots" groups of one kind or another, seeking either to introduce reforms in existing institutions or

to mount community centered programs, require information at all the critical stages of their development and with their ongoing programs. Groups need to know where to turn to get technical assistance; they need information help in the critical task of broadening their base of community participation and in securing funds.

Information Understanding and Skills

Understanding of the information potential in itself is an important information input to be introduced to ghetto people. As people become more aware of the importance of information in understanding their problems and in seeking solutions to them, they make a move from their dependency state to a less hopeless, more positive response to their life conditions.

Information Deprivation

City institutions as well as specialized information services do exist to respond to many of these information problems. But the majority simply do not reach the ghetto resident; they do not present information in terms understandable to him or from the vantage point of his welfare. The information neglect of people is part of more basic neglect and disadvantagement.

A range of controls and barriers to information access pose serious, if not insurmountable, problems. Information needed by groups seeking reforms is frequently

in the hands of the agency being criticized and is difficult if not impossible to obtain. Much information is disseminated by individuals and agencies with strong value biases, as for instance, the judgments high school counselors make in determining who is "college material". Much social data needed by groups seeking to solve difficult and complex problems is simply not collected at all; much of what is collected is either in widely disparate locations and difficult to gather, or is not analyzed from the people's vantage point. The nature of much information collection about ghetto conditions is exploitative in character. Inter-group communication is frequently poor. Local efforts are frequently duplicated because groups working in the same area do not know what the other is doing.

ASPECTS OF THE INTERPRETER ROLE

These problems suggest the nature of the role which the information interpreter can play. Broad information tasks found to be particularly relevant to the inner city situation are: <u>skill in gaining access to information; analysis and interpretation of information in terms of black people and poor people; ability to disseminate information to urban communities</u>.

Work Models

Based upon this year's experience, two broad work models emerge. General interpreters functioning out of a "people" oriented information center, responding to a range of individual group needs and acting as a referral to other agencies and also undertaking information dissemination activities. Interpreters playing this broad role may function from such broad based city institutions as the public library or an inner city college, including also such natural settings as the street academy. Interpreters may also engage in more specialized work for a particular group such as a labor union, a welfare rights organization, a youth group, an adult education program. These types of groups can also be the locale of the more general type of service. In these situations, the prospects are that the interpreters will need to serve the group in other capacities as well, or function on a part-time basis.

Another model not yet tested is that of the professional in private practice. An interpreter or a group of interpreters might have several clients for whom they provide service on either a cooperative or monetary basis.

Leadership Roles

In whatever setting he practices, the interpreter needs to be a member of the client community he serves. His

information tasks are always to be derived from the goals, the problems and the activities of the group. His information service is always seen in terms of the broader problem being addressed. He is expected to contribute information from an understanding of the dynamics of the situation in which he functions and may, in his interpreter role, play a key catalytic or other leadership role. He is expected to initiate information to clients rather than merely responding on request; his stance with agencies obligated to provide information is an aggressive one. He looks beyond immediate one by one service to broader dissemination of critical information. As an interpreter he seeks to expand people's information understanding and skills, rather than to become the sole "knower". Inevitably, in his information capacity he will lead people and groups to look at new alternatives and possibilities. His grasp of futures approaches enhances his ability to help groups define and achieve goals.

CONTENT QUESTIONS

A range of skills and competencies in combination go to define the interpreter role. These include:

Skill Areas

Information Problem Solving
Design of Information Services
Futures Skills
Investigative Skills
Dissemination Skills (media)
Organizing and Teaching Skills

Investigative skills include techniques for collecting and analyzing data, the ability to design and conduct projects and the related skill of proposal writing for funding and other purposes.

Because in most situations there presently exists no organized information service responding to particular needs of the ghetto community, students need therefore to be able to design and operate their own information services, involving highly unconventional, non-resource oriented approaches.

To be most productive, investigative skills and dissemination skills need to be linked to organizing skills.

Information Sources

The nature of the information problems to be solved does not require extensive library expertise; students do need to know about a range of formal and informal information services and resources and how to tap

them. Conventional bibliographic expertise is not as important as other skills listed previously. The definition of urban problems and solutions defines a set of subject areas each involving understanding the nature of the particular problem, the present situation, the groups involved, the directions of change. In this context, the utility of various information sources can be decided. The commitment to serve the deprived further defines the usefulness of various types of urban information and information sources. This is to say that a good share of information available about the inner city has little or no relevance to solving its problems. For this reason, in approaching the study and use of information sources, it is important to begin with and always have in mind needs and problems.

Other Aspects of Information Access

Related information areas deemed important to understanding and responding to the present information situation include: laws governing access to information; recent technological advances influencing information access; privacy and surveillance.

URBAN INFORMATION PRACTICE

Category Definition of Skills and Knowledge Areas*

CLIENT GROUP UNDERSTANDING AND RAPPORT
- high school youth
- undergraduates
- union members
- welfare recipients
- welfare organizers
- high school drop outs
- tenants
- junkies

URBAN BEHAVIORAL BACKGROUND
- Social and economic causes of urban problems
- Trends
- Change Potentials

THE GHETTO

SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE AREAS (human and technical)
- drugs
- housing
- welfare
- employment
- consumer
- legal
- education

COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE (from a peoples perspective)
- city politics
- city problems
- life conditions
- city services
- federal and other special programs
- "grass roots" organizations and programs
- information services and resources

RELATED SKILLS
- Investigative
- Teaching
- Organizing
- Problem solving
- Futures

INFORMATION SKILL AND ABILITIES
- Understanding of the information situation and potential
- Information access, analysis and interpretation
- Design of Information services
- Information dissemination skills
- Preparation of information products

* Based on student information work this year.

INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACHES

There is consensus among program faculty that the next year's instructional approach should involve at least at the outset, a much more demanding, more intensive experience, including frequent feedback from the students.

Practicum

The student's practicum experience this year was a mixed success. A major reason for lack of success was that students were sent to relate to an agency or group in an information capacity before they had a grasp of the role they could play or had developed any information skills. As a consequence, neither they nor the organizations with which they identified were able to chart out such a role. Rather, the organization tended to utilize them for other skills and other purposes.

The Major Project

The student's major project, designed second semester in Applied Research Methods, proved to be the vehicle where the student identified either an information role or the type of information project best suited to his background and interests. These inventive and useful linkups of ghetto needs and information services are the major contributions of this year's students to the Urban program.

Mini Courses

The experiment with mini courses served more to test out the value of the contents presented than to give any amount of skill and understanding.

Content Presentation

Content presented academically, removed from practical application, has met with indifferent success. Black students from the inner city react negatively to theoretical consideration of ghetto issues.

In many cases, instructors were not able to show relevancy of content and much of what was presented was probably either not relevant or not useful in the urban situation. For this reason, plans for course presentation next year involve a high use of the case and problem solving approaches - thus the student will be given more immediate application. Theory should be more meaningfully presented and related to practice.

Synthesis

This year's program has not been entirely successful in gaining a final or continuing overview, synthesis and integration of the program. A pro-seminar conducted the first semester was of indifferent success and students have been left on their own to make such connections. Some of this thinking, review and analysis is going on through the vehicle of program planning and students are taking part in this analysis.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION

We cannot generalize from this year regarding the desirable nature and extent of student participation in a program of this nature. As the situation developed, the director and the faculty adopted fairly traditional roles, even while students had a high degree of latitude in the selection of their work and other projects.

Non-university oriented students do express a preference for more traditional roles. Their response is different from the white activist who may prefer to see the situation in terms of a reaction to traditional authority relationships. On the other hand, they do not assume the position of the traditional conforming student. While they tend to be suspicious of student run educational programs, they respond to traditional education in an extremely independent fashion. This year, they aggressively challenged faculty primarily on value issues, even while accommodating to instructional requirements. Undoubtedly, the aggressive behavior of some students intimidated others. Individual students made various adjustments, relationships varied with instructors, and some shifted during the year, so that generalizations are difficult.

FACULTY PROBLEMS

White faculty in this program have faced problems of cultural rapport, while their lack of understanding of the inner city situation has created the problem of applying their subject competency to the urban situation.

Not everyone is suited for instructing in a program of this type; faculty who are protective of their discipline and unwilling to expose it for challenge and genuine inspection should not associate with such a program. Individuals who are not willing to explore their own value biases or to countenance points of view other than their own, definitely do not belong. A prime prerequisite is the desire to learn, to grow and to "re-educate".

CHOICE OF STUDENTS

Success as measured this year by both the criteria of academic performance and ability to define and perform in an information capacity, has been found to be related to student characteristics and backgrounds. Prospects for success are highest where the student has not only life, but also working experience in the inner city in a leadership capacity. This proven ability we have found to be associated with such other needed characteristics as creativity,

CHOICE OF STUDENTS (contd.)

problem solving ability and a high level of commitment to work with poor people and toward the solution of ghetto problems.

We have learned that white students who are merely disenchanted with the "establishment" may not have a strong social commitment or the potential for inner city work. Furthermore, social commitment does not preclude that an individual may not be racist and this factor is of paramount importance in a program such as this.* It is for this reason that next year particularly white applicants will be expected to have had a recent successful working experience with the urban poor.

Probably the majority of students entering the program did not have a strong interest in pursuing an information work career and some never have developed this interest. This initial ambivalence is understandable in view of the fact that the work role had not been specifically defined. And with the exception of possibly three students, those admitted to this program would have normally never considered entering the library field.

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* Race relations it too complex an issue to be undertaken here. But one example is the inability of many whites to abandon their expectancy of favored treatment because of their race. This factor is of critical importance in poverty work.

EXTERNAL FACTORS

There is no question but that the conflicts this program has had with the regular School and the problems of refunding have had a negative influence on the program of instruction. Important time of the faculty and the director had to be diverted from the instructional program and from contacts with students during the program's early crucial stages. The uncertain environment of the program at one point involved a question as to whether students this year would get their degrees. This certainly added to problems of studying and learning. Problems of financial support for students not on stipends also detracted from study time and added to student uncertainty.

OTHER FACTORS RELATED TO SUCCESS

By virtue of its existence, the problem it is addressing, the kinds of people comprising its participants, this program has been unique in library education and probably in university education. A range of factors - personality, race, ideology, and culture, have been constantly in interplay. In retrospect, it seems that more open confrontations on key issues should have been sought. The program's expectancies should have been related better to individual perspectives

so as to sort out earlier the people who, for one reason or another, were to remain uncommitted to full participation in the program. For this factor more than any other explains the difference between success and failure in this program. Essentially what happened is that a white liberal project became, as it should have, a ghetto, largely black oriented project and in the consequent change over, some people - students and faculty - were no longer suited and could not adjust. The basic confrontation was between inner city needs, perspectives and values and the ability and commitment of those not of this cultural environment to respond.

RELATED ASPECTS

Professionalism

The normal socialization process whereby students are at least minimally professionalized simply will not work with a group of this type. Black and white, they share a disenchantment with professionalism per se. Their commitment is a more basic and fundamental one - and that is to people. While they are eager to learn technical skills, they resist any effort as they see it, to give them commitments which could take priority over and be in contradiction to this more basic people commitment.

Information Versus Revolution

It is very difficult for anyone associated with the overwhelming long standing problems of poor people which this society is either indifferently, or only very slowly addressing, not to begin to question what comes to be seen as mere futile efforts to work through the "system". There develops an impatience to take the time to learn technical skills which seem of such little avail when cast against the problems demanding solution.

This program faces its greatest challenge here - its ability to make the connection between information access and the solution of ghetto problems. Because they saw this potential faculty and many students were attracted to the program. The further development of this critical ghetto resource is the reason for the vital need to continue this program.

THE QUESTION OF CREDENTIAL-ISM

The fact that some students did not have full undergraduate preparation has not been a major issue in instruction. Since a waiver of requirements was involved and admission of non-credentialized students did become an issue in the school, the question warrants some discussion. Despite the record this year, we cannot generalize that

students in a program of this nature are "better off" without a bachelor's degree. We can identify other factors critical to educational success, including a program seen as relevant and an open non-judgmental view of credentialism. Given high commitment, ability to learn, to think and to analyze, specific contents can be mastered.*

Viewed from the vantage point of those seeking to help the poor, the question becomes one of what does the university have to contribute to the solution of ghetto problems? The very real breach which presently exists between formal higher education and non middle class people, must be appreciated. This requires a recognition on the part of universities that attainment of a bachelor's degree prepares people for membership, advancement, work and contribution in some cultural and social settings and not in others. This is a crucial problem for the graduate professional schools, taking as they do, the products of undergraduate education. One of the exciting intellectual aspects of

*Obviously, prior mastery of some subject contents is relevant. For instance, in approaching the learning of computer skills, the average middle aged humanities major is at a disadvantage.

this program is that it provides a meeting ground and the incentive for reformulating and reviewing intellectual content we have in the past considered to be of universal significance. This need has been found to be a real stimulus to creative ways of identifying and viewing problems.

EVALUATION

Program evaluation is particularly important. This professional field urgently needs the benefits of the program in terms of intelligence and insights gained from designing and implementing this educational experience.

Dominance

No genuine evaluation, however, is possible if it is conceived as requiring a group to justify its very existence. And this is merely another way to maintain the white dominant position. It is to deny on the one hand the debt which society owes to those it has neglected and deprived and to ward off facing the need for reform of established institutions. Nor should evaluation of this program proceed from preconceived value assumptions about the best way of doing things, however "enlightened" or "progressive" these assumptions may be. Programs such as this can all too easily become a playing ground for someone's pet educational ideas. One

of the lessons of the year has been that educational approaches derived from and for one cultural group may not be suited to another.

Discovery

The discovery nature of this project is dictated by the lack of social knowledge about the solution to the social problem being addressed and because even less is known about the information response. The program must, therefore, set its own criteria and goals growing from what is found in the uncharted territory being investigated. Only those who have built and are traveling this road are in a position to make these assessments.

Responsibility

The responsibility of the program participants is, therefore, very great to study, to analyze, to understand, to face their mistakes and so to learn important lessons and to seek and invite all the help they can in support of this task. Through such analysis, disseminated widely, the program will discharge its responsibilities to the profession, its university, and its funding source and to the people whom all four - the program, the profession, the university, and the funding agency are responsible - the people in this country who do not presently enjoy even its minimal advantages.

PROGRAM PLANNING

One of the vehicles we have found to be most effective for gaining evaluation on insights is program planning sessions. As groups seek to achieve their own goals, to improve on what they have done in order to better achieve these goals in a non-judgmental atmosphere, they will crystallize and understand what is to be gleaned from an experience. This is not to minimize the contribution of outside consultants who can give the group new input and differing perspectives. Program planning over the summer is also serving the purpose of formulating more precise objectives for the program in the fall. The group is still debating these objectives, but an initial broad statement of program information objectives can be presented:

Program Objectives

---Build the information knowledge base in support of socially derived goals.

---Create other information educational programs.

---Help to initiate people oriented information services in the inner city.

---Spread information skills to poor people and their leadership.

---Encourage black leadership to concern itself with black control and dissemination of inner city information and information exchange with external groups and interests.

Orientation

Also decided has been the need for a beginning three-week orientation program in the fall which will include the presentation of the following kinds of introductory data: an "information survival kit"; introduction to the computer;

introduction to use of the various print and non-print media - techniques and equipment. Additionally, this experience will be used to invite direct confrontation on key success related issues - racism, ideological differences, expectancies the students bring to the program in relation to the program's expectancies. Out of this initial involvement, understanding will be sought on key instructional and group issues.

Future Planning

In succeeding sessions, the planning group plans to further formulate objectives, seeking in particular to determine how the futures approach can infuse the curriculum rather than remain simply a separate component. Various sessions are being chaired by one or another individual; one scheduled for the near future is on the Practicum, another which is being video taped will be a presentation by the instructors of their plans for the fall undergraduate program. These sessions are also serving the function of introducing new faculty into the program in advance of beginning in the fall and permitting them to prepare in advance. Their thinking inserted now means they are not faced with the problem of merely adjusting to an already formulated program.

Even while seeking more focus and employing a more directed approach, the program does not want to lose what may be its most important success factor - its ability to adapt, to grow and to change in response to new need and new potentials.

III. THE EDUCATIONAL CHANGE GAME

A Democratic Approach to Curriculum Change in Library Education

by
Mary Lee Bundy

This approach is particularly recommended for faculty who are unsatisfied with their present programs, have reached stalemates in their efforts to make change and who are now willing to try almost anything *

This "game is designed to overcome the typical problems which confront educational change:

---Curriculum decisions are made divorced from from the goal of preparing a professional worker and therefore amount to speculation, territorial fighting and seldom escape from the confines of tradition.

---Responsibility is not real; i.e., no one is ultimately responsible for the quality of the student's preparation.

---Significant issues are not raised - for instance, white middle class values and traditions are transmitted as though universal and equally applicable.

---Content stands no real tests of relevancy or usefulness.

---Planning is limited because the school does not have the range of faculty talents needed to make change.

---Decisions regarding faculty appointments are not related to agreed-upon objectives and, therefore, tend to be made on an ad hoc basis.

*Kuhn's definition of the conditions necessary for a scientific revolution.

---Admission criteria are not reviewed; curriculum change, therefore, presupposes work role performance requires only graduation from college, any type of subject background and that race and community background are irrelevant.

This model for change incorporates factors we have found to make for success in the Urban Information Specialist Program. The key factor is:

<u>Speciality development based upon an identification with a client group and a type of work role</u>

Rules of the Game

To begin, the following are "givens"

a. The time to be allowed for this program is 36 hours, two academic semesters and a summer session.

b. Only full time students will enter the program.

c. Students may enter the program in the fall and spring semesters.

d. There will be a general core of 12 hours; a specialty core of 12 hours; and 12 hours of advanced work in the specialty.

e. The faculty-student ratio will be ten students for each full time faculty member.

<u>Optional:</u> All resources of the school will be divided in proportion to the number of students being educated - library materials, secretarial assistance, etc.

ALL DECISIONS INCLUDING THESE GIVENS ARE POTENTIALLY REVERSIBLE AS THE GAME PROCEEDS

Players in the Game and the Stakes

Each member of the faculty should agree to trying this approach. The group should reach an agreement to proceed with it at least up to some agreed upon point.

Specialty group "stakes" are the number of students they are prepared to educate. This gives them their right to resources and to decide what the nature of the instruction will be.

Directions for Playing

The game can be played over varying periods of time; it is recommended that Stages One-Four be accomplished within a short period of time so that effort can be put into the general core as other work proceeds.

A coordinator should probably be assigned to keep the program in motion. Groups may elect their own chairman, representatives to larger groups meetings, etc. A method for reaching agreements must be decided upon. It is hoped that the group will move toward consensus rather than remaining dependent upon the vote. One objective of this approach is to help groups become "task oriented" as soon as possible.

It is strongly recommended that records be kept of what transpires during the playing of the game, including using individual "diary" records of faculty members. These records could be invaluable to others undertaking the same task.

Stage One: CHOICE OF WORK ROLE

The game begins by each faculty member making two individual choices:

The client community with which he most identifies
and
One of the following work roles: Information Interpreter, Information Processor, Information Manager

Client communities can be variously defined at this stage - chemists, high school students, etc.

One of the tasks of the groups will be to develop these work roles in a specific context, but in general, they may be viewed as an expansion of the traditional reference, cataloging and management roles to include the handling of information rather than a primary book and bibliographic orientation.

Stage Two: SPECIALTY GROUPING

This is the most difficult and crucial step - the decision as to what will constitute the various specialties. It is done by examining

the various faculty choices and arriving at what seems to be a realistic number and types of groupings. It involves formation of a group to include like interests. If a group is too large, it may mean splitting into parts.

At this stage, the following kinds of questions should also enter - What will be the demands from the field of practice for particular types of specialists? Where does the need lie in terms of unserved client groups? In making these judgments, look to the future. Have a positive view of the role of library education in shaping the profession and of the role the library profession can play in society. Confront the issue of social responsibility openly.

One or another faculty competency may not translate into a specialty. For instance, a school may have one specialist in a highly technical area where expansion of his specialty would not be warranted in terms of the faculty additions necessary and the likely demand for professionals in this area. A faculty member could function independently as a supporting service staff member, but it is highly desirable for each member to be a member of one or another specialty group.

An example of the type of groupings which might emerge would be: A management information specialty concerned primarily with the management of large-scale information services for government and industry; an information interpreter work role in relation to high

school clients largely middle class (an emphasis to be on media); an information interpreter role in relation to the urban poor.

A critical question of course remains. Every school cannot provide specialization in all needed areas. And shouldn't there still be simply a general librarian prepared? Our answer would be that we must move beyond the stage where students take a host of introductory courses, but never do develop any degree of specialization. If properly devised, there can still be considerable individual development, even after the student has elected his specialty choice.

Stage Three: SPECIALTY ANALYSIS

Once the groups are formed, they then go to work on making initial judgments in the following areas:

1. Nature of the tasks people in this specialty should be able to perform.
2. What people need to know to perform these tasks.
3. What characteristics, personal and educational and other experiences students should have upon entry.
4. What content and abilities should the program provide.
5. What particular teaching methods and approaches are desirable.

(see the attached listing of the Urban Information Specialist Program as an example of what is involved)

Preferably during this stage, but no later than Stage Six, each group should form a field advisory committee composed of knowledgeable and affected persons, librarians in the field working in the area, members of the client community or community leaders, students who have an interest in this area. This committee should work with the group through the remainder of the game. Resource consultants can also be employed by the groups as they consider one or another problem or issue.

Stage Four: DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMON CORE

Each group now sends a representative to form a group to work on the general core. Theoretically, the core will consist of these elements which are found to be common to all specialities. But readjustments may grow out of group dialogue on this issue.

Development of the common core should proceed concurrently with speciality activities. Teachers for the core will be supplied by each specialty group on varying bases - to teach a course, lecture on a subject, etc. The object here is for the specialties to gain the advantage of sharing. The core relieves the speciality group of having to offer elements they either are not prepared to offer or which would deplete their faculty resources.

Stage Five: BARTERING

As planning continues, groups now look to sharing between specialities, such as having a common course, lending a faculty member to a group in exchange for another. For instance, an information

interpreter role specialty might want to have their students have more work related to the design of information services than is to be provided in the common core. They would turn to that specialty group for faculty expertise. A course might be developed for the interpreter group, oriented toward their particular interests, or it might be decided that their students would take a course in the other specialty.

We have used the term "course" throughout because it defines time dimensions. But do not be limited to this traditional set . Consider a range of possibilities - individual and group field experiences, major professional and research projects, imaginative use of consultants, variations in the time allotted to the mastery of particular contents. If your specialty involves moving into uncharted territory, you may wish to adopt a "discovery" investigative mode throughout the educational experience.

Stage Six: REALIZATION

This phase involves further study, bringing in experts, faculty field trips, etc. It should move toward fairly concrete plans. Student selection criteria should be specified and plans for recruitment of students worked out. Needs for new faculty based upon the identification of competencies required should be defined. At this stage, some of the original game decisions may be changed in the light of group goals and feasibility. Evidence can be collected to support proposals if changes are going to involve review by a university group or require additional funding.

Some general school decisions may also develop out of this planning, such as a requirement for field experience. We recommend, however, that groups be given the maximum of flexibility in order to respond to their particular client and work role commitments. For instance, one specialty might call for a good deal of course work outside the school, but another specialty may not.

<u>The essential task for each group is the planning of the educational preparation of x people in its particular specialty</u>

<u>Stage Seven</u>: TESTING OUT

A means should be devised for a "mock run". Students coming fresh to the endeavor can be asked to look at the total program which would evolve and asked to respond to how these various choices would seem to affect them. In these and other ways, the "kinks" can be ironed out of the plans and unanticipated consequences identified.

<u>Stage Eight:</u> IMPLEMENTATION

Finally, the faculty of the school must reach decisions about how to implement their revised curriculum. They may wish to develop a three-year plan, including the phasing out of the existing program. One or another specialty might run on an experimental basis before the others begin.

We did not include a doctoral component in this scheme, but it could be incorporated by having each specialty consider itself to have a research arm. The various specialties could cooperate to form a common doctoral experience as they did with the general core.

Prospective game players are advised that this game has never been played before; it might be better to wait until someone else tries it first.

URBAN INFORMATION SPECIALIST PROGRAM
A SPECIALTY ANALYSIS

To Illustrate the Types of Decisions to be Made

I. <u>The Client Community</u>
the Inner City Poor

II. <u>Type of Work Role</u>
Information Interpreter

III. <u>Tasks to be Performed</u>

Gain access to information using a range of means and sources
Analyze and interpret information from a client perspective
Disseminate information to client communities using a range of media
Design and operate non-conventional information services for client groups
Prepare special information products
Teach people about the information potential and give them information skills
Be an active force in encouraging group use of information in goal setting and problem solving

IV. <u>Knowledge and Abilities Needed</u>

Community knowledge
Client group understanding and rapport
Behavioral understanding of the urban situation
Specialized urban knowledge (housing, etc.)
Information skills and abilities
Related skills

V. <u>Type of Student</u>

Life experience in the inner city
Working experience in the city in a leadership capacity
Problem solving ability
Social commitment
Motivation to learn

VI. <u>Instructional Content (Core)</u>

Information problem solving
Dissemination skills
Design of information services
Investigative skills
Future skills
Legal understanding
Organizing and teach skills
(Specialties still experimental)

VII. <u>Instructional Methods</u>

Problem solving approach
Case approach
Field experience

VIII. <u>Faculty Competencies</u>

Research methods
Reference
Information center design
Law
Media
Futures approach
Urban information

THE CRITICAL ELEMENTS

START

Do not remove these elements;
Do not stray from this path

Recognition of the need for change
Willingness to try this approach

PATH
I.
NAME A WORK ROLE CHOICE

ELEMENTS

Specialize

Relate to a client community

Relate to work roles

II.
GROUP BY SPECIALTIES

Get community, professional and student involvement

Take a long term view

Be socially responsive

III.
DO SPECIALTY ANALYSIS

Assume educational responsibilities

Analyze tasks, requisite knowledge, relevant student characteristics, content, methods

IV.
FIND A COMMON CORE

Build from the specific to the general

V.
BARTER

Negotiate, cooperate, struggle to fulfill educational commitments

VI.,VII.,VIII
PLAN, TEST,.ARRANGE TO IMPLEMENT

Build a <u>total</u> program capable of realization

FINISH

A powerful, dynamic workable educational plan

PROSPECT GAME CARDS FOR ISSUE CONFRONTATION

These cards are available to everyone. Individuals or groups may put these cards on the table when they feel the situation calls for it. If a card is played the faculty must then meet to discuss the issue. Faculty may wish to add other prospect cards before starting the game.

PENALTIES

---Your work role is too tied to existing practice in libraries; it proves to be irrelevant or of little value to the client group

---You remain too book and bibliographic oriented; your work role is largely irrelevant

---You fail to relate your work role to important needs of your client group; your work role serves no important purpose

---You do not get out of the traditional "set" of library education; you never leave start

---You get bogged down in the mechanics and rituals of your plan; you lose the purpose

---You do not bring your advisory committee in early and keep them involved; you fail to learn from them and may not have their support when you need it

---You do not deal realisitically with such related questions as financial resources; you might as well be back at start

---Your expectancies are too low; you are not willing to fight; your students pay

---You do not learn to articulate your point of view; you are not understood

---You do not tolerate the ideas of others; they will not tolerate yours

---You are not willing to learn; you become obsolete

IF YOU INCUR ANY OF THE FIRST FIVE PENALTIES AND DO NOT OVERCOME THEM, YOU ARE OUT OF THE GAME!

OBSTACLES*

---Your advisory committee cannot work together
---Your dean begins to feel he is loosing control and starts to sabotage efforts
---Your present students rebel because of the amount of time the faculty is spending on the game and away from their current instructional responsibilities
---Your present students become alarmed that the new program will make them dinosaurs
---Student "radicals" demand more of a say in the game
---One or two individuals delay progress
---Internal group dissension delays progress
---Groups engage in continual fight over resources
---You run into policies of the graduate school they are not willing to change for you
---An external curriculum committee does not approve of your plan; cautions you to go slow
---The university administration refuses a funding request

CHANCE

---A funding source looking for an innovative program in library education comes along and gives you money
---A key member of a group leaves
---A severe financial ressession sets in, necessitating tremendous cuts in budgets

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*Warning: Game players are cautioned that if several of these factors are operative at once, that is, if there is a highly unfavorable external and internal climate, prospects for success are dismal. Faculty may have to employ unusual strategies.

REWARDS

---Groups find they have gotten a new "set" on problems of library education
---Groups prove capable of coming together to solve common problems
---The faculty finds new ways to cope with its poor teachers, and "goof offs"
---Longstanding personality differences are minimized
---Individual faculty members find new potentials in themselves; take on a new teaching lease
---Students become proud to be in change oriented school
---Client group contacts help find promising students
---Advisory groups lend political support when needed
---Exciting content is introduced into the curriculum
---Standards are raised
---Priorities are agreed upon, future decisions can be made in this framework
---Specialities involving differing cultural value orientations, commitments, content and methods, learn to co-exist; mutual respect begins to develop
---The school is now ready to move into educational preparation for viable, socially responsive work roles for the future

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A Special Group Incentive: The "Excellence in Game Playing Award" goes to the first group able to play any five of the reward cards. This is a financial reward to be decided by the faculty in advance of starting the game

HOLE CARDS

Hole cards are only for those groups electing an urban poor speciality. These groups face particular problems because of lack of understanding on the part of members of the white dominant system; lack of real commitment to change social conditions; the problems of adjusting technical expertise into ghetto terms; and racism. To give them a "fair chance" we have devised special help. Groups should contact the Urban Information Specialist Program directly for Ace Cards. To receive a card they must communicate that they are a genuine "people" oriented group.

CRITICAL INFORMATION

We have tried to anticipate what lies before the game players. We have controlled ourselves; we have not made you recognize your social responsibilities in the beginning, by requiring you to have a poverty specialty and to give it all the support it needs even if other interests suffer.

But our intentions are not to support the status quo even if everyone wants it. There is a danger that a faculty will take this game and use it to protect the traditions of the field under the guise of innovation. In order to avoid the very real possibility that old wine will be put in new bottles, we have withheld critical information. We will distribute it to you only when you have communicated to us that you are honestly playing this game.

THE EVALUATOR

Assuming you have successfully played this game and now have a dynamite program ready to begin, have attracted community and professional support, have recruited the right type of student for each of your specialties, have convinced all the necessary outside groups, have found and secured all the outside talent you need and are now eager and ready to go, one more critical task confronts you.

You must find an evaluator for all innovative programs must have an evaluator. (Unlike your former program which was never required to submit itself to such tests.) The evaluator has secret knowledge which we cannot give you because only he holds it and that is the criteria and standards by which he proposes to evaluate you.

If you have now become a group capable of accomplishing the tasks set in this game you may want to elect another alternative: <u>Conduct your own self evaluation based on standards you derive</u>. While this approach is very unusual you being assumed not to be able to be objective about the results of your program, it has been tried with success by us in the urban program this year. We highly recommend it if you wish to learn and share with others as you proceed with your new program.

IV. PARTICIPANTS' COMMENTS

Director's Comments

The impact of the Urban Information Specialist program has been felt not only in library education and librarianship where one would presume it would have an effect, but outside the profession as well, in the lives of men and women who otherwise would never have interested themselves in the problems or the potentials of the library and information field.

In a profession so desparately seeking to change an image; to create a demand for its services; to recruit minorities; to prepare a new breed of professionals; to identify an intellectual core of knowledge unique to its discipline; to define a social purpose for its institutions and a professional role for its practicioners, the Urban Information Specialist program at Maryland must be seen as a fortunate and timely occurence in this professional field.

The program was able to capitalize on the fortuitious combination of intellectual and technical resources; innovative and non-conventional admissions standards; the rich talent and experience of a challenging student body; the proximity of two black professional and inner city communities. In so doing the program was able to grow and develop in ways that even its original architects could not have foreseen or planned. This development, however, unmistakably made the program more acceptable to Black interests and less understandable in white middle class terms.

Necessity, not choice, dictated that the program assume a "survival mode" early in its operational phase. The conditions of existence for the program participants came to approximate those

of oppressed people hopelessly trapped in ghettos, surrounded by and dependent for its future on a hostile and suspicious larger alien culture. For many of the students and faculty coming recently from academia and/or suburbia with at best an intellectual grasp of racism, and ghetto conditions, just putting up with the daily frustrations and anxiety resulting from constant harrassment and outside pressures proved too much to bear. Several elected to take other "options" which were open to them. Those participants who remained and fought to survive within the program, discovered allies in the black community and active support coming from sources unknown to them.

For nine almost unbearable months, the participants in this program lived a way of life which gave them a sensitivity to the plight of ghetto residents in a way that no theoretical course in sociology could ever have. Isolated from their broader community of the school, left without peer relationships, they waged a constant battle against the power of institutional racism, always present, always ready to be utilized to stop them; always requiring of them explanations they should not have had to make.

It is not surprising that they began to articulate the response of oppressed people for self determination; their right to direct their own destiny. For there is no other response to continual exploitation and disadvantagement by people who are not a part of one's community and are hostile to its existence except on the most marginal and always "inferior" basis and in the case of this project not at all. It is not fantasy to suggest that white america would similarly like to keep its black population confined and dwindling in number.

It would have been difficult and almost foolish to try to separate the program's survival problems from the academic concerns of the institute, for by approximating ghetto conditions, the project became in effect it own case and model for studying what a ghetto information interpreter can contribute. The program confirmed the impoetance of maintaining outside awareness of one's efforts to survive. Information specialists must possess journalistic skills and reporting abilities to help poor communities better communicate and disseminate information about their issues and their struggles. Such reporting must occur while "engaged in the battle" and not post mortem as an academic after thought.

We learned in the course of the project's efforts to survive, that the ability to attract political attention and to qualify for financial support were prerequisite to any serious negotiations wighin the larger power structure for institutional consessions or for freedom from certain institutional constraints. Drawing the parallel, the information interpreter needs not only to be adept at dealing with political leadership at the grass roots level, but in the institutionalized power layers of the society as well. We turned serious attention to teaching students the art of proposal writing and the science of finding sources of funding so that in working with poor communities they could contribute these necessary prerequisites for negotiations with metropolitan power holders. Literature searching and other traditional bibliographical skills became important to know about only as they became avenues to be used in problem solving.

We also learned an even more important fact this year and that is, the talents needed for survival have been produced by the very necessity to survive. Time and time again the program drew for help in a crises on the intellectual versitality and creativity of students from the ghetto. The explanation for this ability to respond creatively in crisis conditions may be found in the model developed by Kuhn of the ideal conditions necessary for invention or creating "scientific revolutions." Here the traditional options are canceled out and the will to survive mounts, "alternatives" are devised and new options are created.

The implications here could very well revolutionize black recruitment efforts in particular and could demand a new approach in dealing with Black people in general. If indeed the forced existence under "crisis conditions" tends to produce people more flexible, more creative, better learners than those who mature under safe, protected and non-demanding conditions, then the wrong people are being encouraged to go to school and to enter the professions and the most logical ones are being kept out.

Also in a world where the perfection and refinement of existing knowledge is of decreasing importance and where the stress must be placed upon individuals who can conceptualize new approaches, take bold and radical departures from the norm, exist comfortably with the unknown and uncertain, then black people cannot continue to be seen as deprived or disadvantaged in the sense that they lack something important the white community has been blessed with.

More to the point, is the institutionalized insanity which keeps intelligent and competent individuals in subservient roles,

preforming tasks to prop up the myth of white cultural superiority. The programs designed to help the so called "disadvantaged" to learn the realities of how the cultural, political and economic institutions of the society operate to keep them permanently disadvantaged.

It is clear that programs which purport to train "middle managers to better utilize paraprofessionals" are seeking to communicate new found intelligence to a white elite about how to control and manipulate black workers to perform in the best interests of the institution. Leadership and administrators development programs are a more sophisticated version of the same thing. Rather than frankly informing most top level administrators that they are the problem--and hence their own worst enemy--and to return control of their institutions over to the people they purport to serve, these developmental programs pass on the latest in jargon and technique so as to make the administrator appear "relevant" which he is not, and to allow him to continue to exploit the talent and services of the people who work under him.

To be very frank, we have found most middle class white people are "remedial" in terms of ability to think imaginatively and creatively on their feet, in recognizing a new idea and its immediate logical consequences, in acquiring a sensitivity to the "felt" needs of others, in communicating with groups "culturally different" from themselves, non-verbally as well as non-printably.

These limitations are by no means exclusive to the white race but even in the most socialized black person, there exists some "inner understanding" that allows for such "felt" communication at some level. This level of "empathetic communication" is found

more prevalent among non-whites than whites; among Jews than non-Jews; among women than men; among homosexuals than "straights", in short, among any of the "out" groups, than any "in" group in terms of larger cultural acceptance.

The program this year helped to place into focus, the unique contribution which the black professional has to make in the field of urban information work. By virtue of his demonstrated leadership ability, the black information specialist becomes the natural interpreter to, and on behalf of the urban black community. By his previous membership and participation in the community to be served, he is able to make a client identification link-up which virtually assures his acceptability and effectiveness in the inner city. His social commitment is confirmed by his natural opposition as a black man to racial injustice and institutionalized oppression. By virtue of his living and working experience in the ghetto, and his training and credentialization at the university, the black professional finds himself becoming a natural link between two distinct and disparate cultures. preter" role for which he is being prepared is of course a logical and necessary response to the communication breakdown between the black urban poor and the white institutional elite.

In defining the professional contribution of the black information worker, we were in effect simultaneously identifying the parameters of effectiveness in which the non-black information worker could expect to play a viable information role. As an "interpreter" to and on behalf of the black community, the non-black information specialist would encounter a great deal of personal

resistance from the community toward his service performance. This is due in large part to the mistrust of black innner city residents to the service commitments and intentions of the non-black professional workers. Many of the white students in this year's program avoided this pitfall by developing a "technical expertice" in working with black groups, thus allowing them to employ their information skills on behalf of the black community in supportive rather than leadership roles. Such a decision represents a sensitivity to the needs of inner city residents who demand role models which reflect not only their social and political perspectives, but their ethnic community ss well.

It is significant that while librarianship as a profession is viewed by the vast majority of black people as totally irrelevant to their future survival needs in this country, information access and control is seen as a vital social and political factor by black scholars and laymen alike. The library and information service profession in order to become relevant to minority and other deprived peoples must place increased emphasis on the "information services" aspect of the professional role, and de-emphasize the importance of work in libraries as the primary function of one who recieves the Masters of Library Science degreee. This first year of the Urban Information Specialist Project has proven the "attractability" information work has in recruiting black people and other highly socially commited activists into the field of librarianship. This first year has also revealed the immense variety of potential roles to be played in an information capacity by both black and white professionals with technical and behavior-

al expertise.

There has already been some very encouraging feedback from some of the more socially responsive institutions withir the profession, namely the public libraries in large urban areas, or with ethnic minority constituents. The public library systems of Detroit, Michigan; Montclair, New Jersey; Modesto, California; Boston, Mass.; Baltimore, Md.; Washington, D.C.; and many others not known to us at the present time, are beginning to make the necessary institutional changes in personel classification and job description; out-reach program design and budget allocations, and professional recruitment and community staff development to accomodate the shift toward providing more "information services" to their publics.

It is in library education that we still see no signs of institutions dramatically reshifting course contents, faculty compositions, student enrollments, or resource allocations to encourage the necessary preperation for professional information work roles.

When the Office of Education new institute program came into existence, calling for bold and dramatic departures in library education, it appeared that perhaps a new deal was in the offing for Black people in this profession. The stipulation that library schools were to submit proposals that would be judged on the basis of their innovativeness, and relevance to current social problems offered this field's educational institution a unique opportunity to experiment in an area totally neglected by librianship. If the library schools did as we hear react negatively to the institute program because they lost their fellowship funds in the exchange, then this is but one more commentary on this field's interest in mounting innovative and experimental programs, and where their societal priorities lie. Black professionals in this field should not be confused. The fellowship program as originally conceived encouraged the status quo aspect of this field, by awarding financial assistance to people who qualified by "white standards" and reflected white ideals and aspirations in this field. It is of little wonder that the percentage of Blacks who benefited from the fellowship program was so minute as to be almost non-existent.

If the Office of Education in funding the programs they did is trying to give recognition to the failure of this field to respond to the needs of today's urban crisis; to suggest that library school faculties as presently constituted cannot respond to the education of minorities; that educational programs currently being offered in professional schools are irrelevant to the demands of the 1970's and insulting to the real needs of Black people in the

inner city, and that librarianship in general has really very little to offer the Black professional who might consider entering this field, then I say RIGHT ON! But if this program is merely a political bone being thrown to Black interest in this field, to be abandoned when the current fascination with Blackness has passed with the change of administration; if the Office of Education does not genuinely want to learn how to be relevant to ethnic minorities and Black people in the ghetto, then it should abandon the guise of being so supportive in order that the energies of Black people in this field will not be drained in futile effort to save a dying profession.

Reviewing the kinds of programs which have received funding in the field; recognizing the fact that the vast majority still remain under the control and direction of whites; that the areas of emphasis still remain focused on librarianship as a book-oriented, middle class profession with Blacks being trained as paraprofessionals, and whites being prepared to better manage them, then responsible Black interests in librarianship must regard as the ultimate insult any decision which would mitigate against the re-funding of the Urban Information Specialist Project at the University of Maryland. It is a fact that the only degree granting institute in this profession which has openly committed itself to serving the information interests of the Black inner-city poor, to the full professional preparation of Black information specialists, to the restructuring of white institutions so as to be relevant to Black needs, and to otherwise revive a decaying institution, is the Urban Information Specialist Program.

Students' Comments

"Need to Know in the Ghetto"

by

Alfred Nero

It is clearly understood that for Black folks in this country, mobilization without any programmatic planning or method is not only an effort in futility, but is also suicidal. A "programmatic approach" would be one that reduces the present dependency of the Black community on government controlled community agencies and institutions such as the schools and hospitals, in favor of one which would equip Black people to analyze their own problems from a more correct perspective and put forth more relevant solutions to their problems. Such an information program would have the greatest impact upon inner city school youth, who in large part have received the most relevant aspects of their education from the streets (Street Education) as opposed to the so-called education available in the classroom. Such programs would of necessity concentrate on the areas of drug abuse, welfare rights, health and welfare community services (as to their availability and relevance to meeting inner city needs), and the all important need of providing historical evidence of Black cultural and religious ideological roots, to replace the incorrect notions of African beginnings, and restore the essence of respect and pride in Blackness which present educational programs attempt to obliterate.

"The Role of the White Information Specialist in the Black Community"

by

Tony Miller

Much has been said in this document and elsewhere about the needs of the black community for the skills and techniques developed during the first year of the Urban Information Specialist Project. This emphasis has not been at all overstated; but it may lead some to conclude that whites have no role to play in serving the needs, informational and otherwise, of inner city dwellers. This conclusion is no more valid than the misconception that all deprived urban residents are non-white. The aged the chronicly ill, and the rural migrant are trapped in the city by their economic plight, just as blacks have been packed into urban areas because of the color of their skin.

The skills developed in Urban Information Specialist Project's first year are not black skills to be embraced by anyone resulting in effective service to the poor living in our cities. Indeed, students who entered the program without a self-identity and a commitment to a specific type of people have found adjustment difficult. The skills learned are useful regardless of the racial composition of the information worker's client group. It is the approach taken by the information professional which is the critical factor determining if he can effectively work with his clients.

For the white information specialist working in the black community the choice is between the acceptance of a supportive role, or the traditional elitist approach of "guiding the underprivileged".

A sensitivity on the part of the information specialist to the problems and needs peculiar to the black community is essential to his acceptance as a useful part of its struggle. The white working in the black community must keep in mind that it is his skill and expertise, not his personality and sympathetic attitude which make him valuable to his client group. He must be aware that he is there to provide a service to blacks, not to adopt their life style and become "one of the boys". The desire to share his knowledge and inparticular his technical skills with his clients is crucial in avoiding the usual paternalistic relationship between professional and client.

By virtue of his backround, the white brings to the ghetto the ability to help his client group through the myriad of bureaucratic obstacles in its path, as well as acting as a link between the black community and the outside world.

There is no question that the Urban Information Specialist Project has and can continue to provide its students with the technical skills necessary to have an impact on the lives of persons in the inner city, regardless of their color. But this is not enough. The real challenge to any urban oriented program is to provide an environment in which commited individuals with inner city experience can test out the specific role they can play with their client group. The Urban Information Specialist Project is probably unique in its understanding and commitment to this challenge.

"Reflections: by a Student as Nigger"

by

Andrew Jones

In this white world the Black man stands alone like an island. He is neither accepted nor any longer needed. He has become a burden to the white world around him.

So stands the Urban Information Specialist Project, an island, a social and political "burden" that the white world does not want to shoulder. Although it is increasingly obvious that unless more efforts like this are begun and carried on and the needs addressed, nothing but an all out physical confrontation can result.

How can programs like this meet the needs of the urban centers? In my estimation one of the paramount problems in this urban existence (because we cannot call it living) is information deprivation. Almost every problem of urban existence stems from some source of mis-information or lack of related information. Misinformation is prevalent about housing regulations, tenant rights, welfare benefits, welfare rights, civil cases, legal rights, drug abuse and drug treatment centers, basic and adult educational opportunities, employment opportunities, cultural and self determination centers, political and/or community control.

We have knocked on the door too long; now we no longer want to enter. We demand mechanisms for equalizing not assimilating into the white world--and the question is credentialism.

The white man in his effort to protect that which he so dearly loves (his white world) has built in safety mechanisms to ward off unwanted elements. He has created a devious system which he calls education. There are various steps in this educational hierarchy, the elementary and secondary route is the standard while the advanced and/or professional levels revolve around college degrees of varying importance.

One could argue that this is not a true safeguard because anyone can pass through this educational route. But while anyone can make the attempt to spiral this hierarchy a mechanism used to keep Black people and minorities from succeeding is already built in. That mechanism is the cultural aspect of white middle classdom, the one hurdle that inert intelligence and/or book knowledge cannot scale.

Contrary to all the purported reasons for the harassment suffered by the Urban Information Specialist Project it is my sincere belief that much of the harassment was a direct result of the project's bypassing many of these educational safeguards, and supports my basic belief that whites do not want niggers to have degrees.